

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 171

By Ramsey

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Lieutenant Colonel Bill Rhea Starnes.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Lieutenant Colonel Bill Rhea Starnes; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant Colonel Starnes, the pilot for K-VA-T Food Stores, Inc., and Central Coal Company and a distinguished veteran known for his skillful flying and commitment to his country, died on August 24, 2012; and

WHEREAS, at the young age of 14, Bill Starnes learned to fly under the tutelage of his father, Rhea; the skill and love of flying that he learned from his father led to a nearly forty-year career in the military that took him to locations around the world; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of East Tennessee State University, Bill Starnes joined the United States Army and graduated from flight school at Fort Rucker, Alabama, in 1971 and qualified on the UH-1A/B/D/H, TH-55, and AH-1G Cobra helicopters before being assigned to the C Troop, 7th Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, Bill Starnes bravely flew approximately 800 combat hours while stationed in Vietnam before being transferred to Battery B, 4th Battalion, 77th Aerial Field Artillery, 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky; and

WHEREAS, in 1974 Bill Starnes joined the Tennessee Army National Guard and continued to valiantly serve his country, including as a member of the Joint Task Force Paladin in Kosovo, as he gained expertise and experience on additional aircraft, eventually commanding multiple line units and attaining the rank of lieutenant colonel before his retirement in 2009; and

WHEREAS, a highly decorated pilot, Bill Starnes earned the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, two Air Medals with Valor, Army Commendation Medal, nine Army Achievement Medals, five Army Reserve Components Achievement Medals, three National Defense Service

Medals, Global War on Terrorism Medal, Kosovo Campaign Medal with Bronze Star, and Armed Forces Reserve Medal with "M" device; and

WHEREAS, Bill Starnes also earned three Armed Forces Reserve Medals, Army Service Ribbon, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, NATO Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with 60 Device, Vietnam Service Medal with four campaign stars, two Overseas Service Ribbons, Master Army Aviator Badge, seven Tennessee National Guard Service Ribbons, Tennessee National Guard Distinguished Unit Commendation Ribbon, and Tennessee National Guard Volunteer Ribbon; and

WHEREAS, a valued and loyal pilot for K-VA-T Food Stores, Inc., and Central Coal Company, Bill Starnes had also previously flown for Pittston Coal Company, providing safe transportation for company executives and others; and

WHEREAS, a true patriot, Bill Starnes possessed a generous spirit, firm commitment to his country, and immense love of flying, and will be greatly missed by his many loving family members, friends, and coworkers; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant Colonel Starnes leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Lieutenant Colonel Bill Rhea Starnes, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Lieutenant Colonel Starnes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.